(c) Some of the steps taken to reduce the delay in issue of passports are enumerated below :—

(i) Passport applications are scrutinised at counters and incomplete/ defective applications are returned to applicants on the spot, pointing out the deficiencies. Incomplete applications received by post are returned the same day pointing out the deficiencies.

(ii) Despatch of the personal particular forms of applicants to the police/CID authorities within 24 hours of their receipt.

(iii) Periodical reminders to the police/CID authorities and constant liaison with those authorities at various levels, for speeding up verification reports.

(iv) Simplification and rationalization of passport procedures.

(v) Deployment of additional temporary staff and provision of special incentives to staff for over-time work.

(vi) Despatch of passports to applicants within 5 working days of the receipt of police & CID reports/ clearance from the concerned authorities.

(vii) The question of provision of additional staff/redeployment of staff is engaging Government's urgent attention and additional officers/staff would be provided to the passport offices to cope with the increese in the work load as soon as possible.

(viii) Urgent measures are being taken to increase the printing of the passport booklets capacity by the Indian Security Press Nasik. As a stop gap arrangements, passport booklets have been diverted to the concerned passport offices to meet the immediate shortfall.

(ix) The progress of disposal of passport applications is regularly monitored weekly with the help of computers by the CPV Division of the Ministry of External Affairs.

STD facility to telephone users at Aranmula in Kerala

2281. SHRI THOMAS KUTHIRAVATTOM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state whether Govt. propose to provide STD facility to telephone users at Aranmula, Kerala ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): No, Sir; Not at present.

Doordarshan Relay Centre at Pattanamthitta in Kerala

2282. SHRI THOMAS KUTHIRAVATTOM : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) Whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to increase the coverage of the Doordarshan Relay Centre at Pattanamthitta in Kerala ; and

(b) Whether Govt. propose to relay Malayalam Programmes through this Centre ?

THE MINISTER OF INFORATION AND BROADCASTING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. UPENDRA) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. There are no such proposals under the consideration of the Government at present.

Elum Bye-Pass on National Highway-5

2283. SHRIMATI RATAN KUMARI : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) what is the present stage of the construction of Elum bye-pass